

that his term as President had obliged him to acquire a hearing aid!

In that year he (with a couple of other enthusiasts — I was one) laboured with pick and shovel to lay out a nature trail in the Coranderrk Sanctuary. This project was undertaken at the request of the Committee of Management of the Sanctuary. The trail may still be there for all I know. Another enterprise in which he concerned himself was the Kalorama Show at which garden grown native plants were prominently featured. This and similar events in other districts set him thinking about bringing together these growers of native plants. In no time the thought had crystallized into action and he gently converted the Club's Wildflower Garden Section into an independent body which he named the Society of Growing Australian Plants. Its first meeting took place in June, 1957. It is worth putting on record that all of the officers of the new society were members of the FNCV. Not only was Arthur Swaby its founder and Organizing Secretary but he produced and edited a printed newsletter. Eleven of these leaflets were issued between January, 1957 and March, 1959. In June, 1961 its place was taken by a roneoed newsletter which continued for eight years during which time Mr

Swaby, in recognition of his services to the, by that time, well established and Commonwealth-wide Society, was elected an honorary life member.

In 1968, after having served the Field Naturalists Club with what can only be described as unremitting energy for forty years, he qualified for election as one of its honorary life members. Being then in his 81st year the distinction was, to say the least, well merited. On the occasion of the presentation of his certificate of honorary membership in July of that year, his friend of long standing, J.H. Willis, recounted some of the achievements of the recipient.

I feel honoured to have been invited to dwell upon and, where appropriated even enlarge upon some of them. Along with several others, I have been closely associated with him during the past thirty years and will always recall his self-effacing modesty, his reluctance to pose as an expert in matters in which he was indeed one and his ever-present urge to impart knowledge. Obviously, his vocation was education and, insofar as it affected his fellow members of the Club, he pursued it successfully. My wife and I were among the too few members of the FNCV who attended his funeral.

J. Ros. Garnet.

A recent stranding of the Strap-toothed Whale, *Mesoplodon layardi* (Gray) (Ziphiidae) from Victoria, and a review of Australian records of the species.

BY JOAN M. DIXON*

Introduction

Little is known of the biology of the strap-toothed whale *Mesoplodon layardi*. Described by Gray (1865), and known from southern waters only, there are few documented records of this species. Bruyns (1971) mentioned approximately thirty-seven specimens are known. Gaskin (1968) and Baker

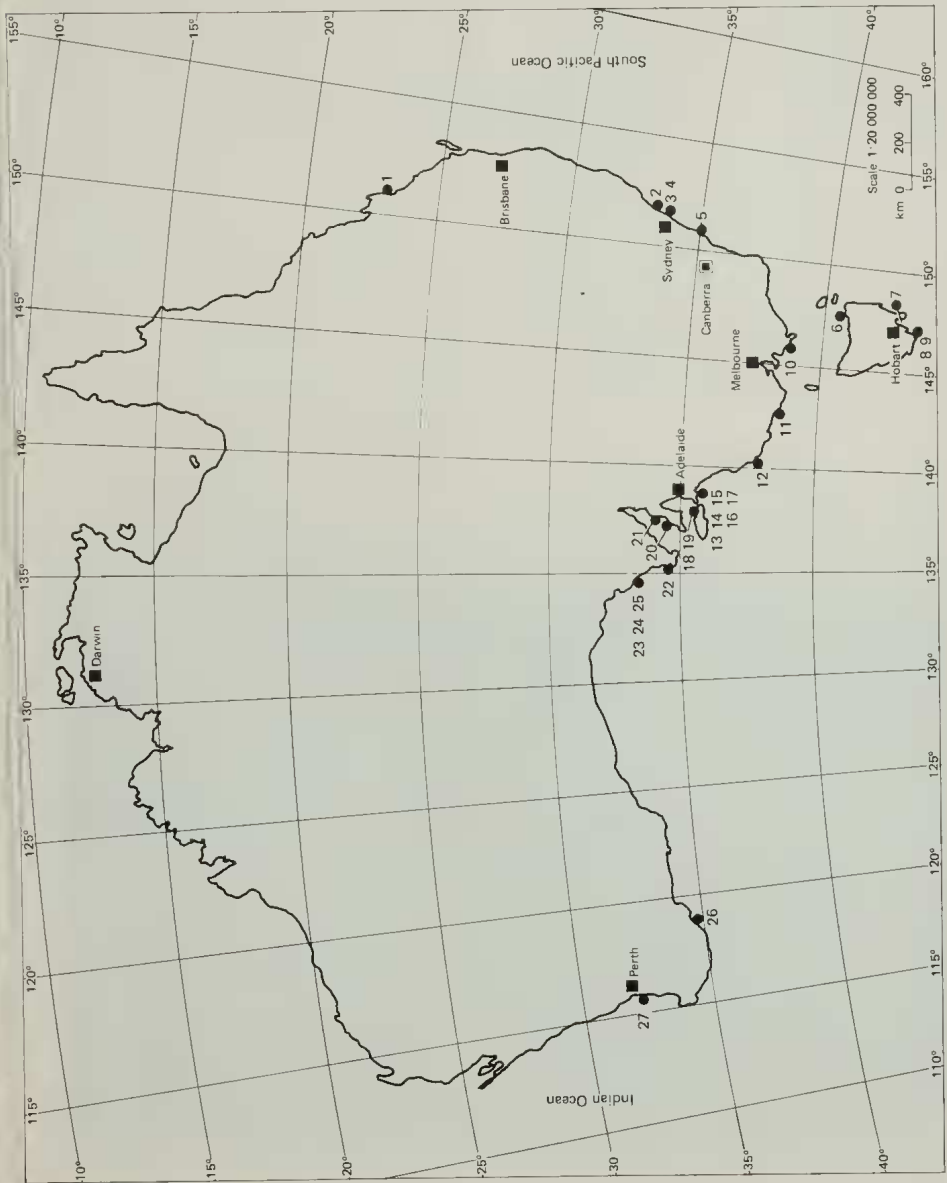
(1972) listed nineteen and twenty specimens from New Zealand respectively. The Australian records have never been documented. An investigation of the holdings of the species in Australian museums has revealed the existence of twenty-three specimens from Australia excluding photographs and including the most recent record which is reported here. This specimen is the third record of the species from Victoria and the first male from the State.

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The family Ziphiidae, commonly known as Beaked Whales, contains five genera and eighteen species. The prominent beak is common to all members of the family, and in most species, the lower jaw which is slightly longer than the toothless upper jaw, has one or two pairs of teeth. These show considerable sexual dimorphism. As a rule they are

small or rudimentary in females, and larger and more conspicuous in males of the same species.

Mesoplodon layardi, the strap-toothed whale, was described by J. E. Gray (1865) following observations made by E. L. Layard, Keeper of the South African Museum at Capetown entitled "Notes on Whales of the Cape".



MAP 1. Records of the strap-toothed whale *Mesoplodon layardi* on the Australian coast.

Table 1. Measurements of *Mesoplodon layardi* C 23446 male (in cm).

Total length	552.0
Tip of upper jaw to centre of eye	81.0
Tip of upper jaw to corner of mouth	43.5
Tip of upper jaw to blowhole	70.0
Tip of upper jaw to anterior insertion of flipper	135.0
Tip of upper jaw to tip of dorsal fin	344.0
Tip of upper jaw to centre of anus vent	400.0
Length of flipper from anterior insertion to tip	46.0
Width of flipper	28.0
Width of tail fluke	132.2
Depth of notch in tail fluke	6.0
Height of dorsal fin	31.0
Tooth length (mean)	20.0
Tooth width (mean)	7.5

Measurements made on site by S. Bruton, National Parks Service.



Fig. 1. Stranded *Mesoplodon layardi* male. Discovery Bay, south-west Victoria, C 23446.

Photo: Joan M. Dixon.

Layard forwarded descriptions and drawings made by Mr Trimen of the South African Museum to Gray. The observations together with the accompanying notes were analysed, and the new species from the Cape of Good Hope illustrated by a male skull showing the distinctive elongated strap-tooth with its small apical process.

Known from the South Pacific and Indian Oceans from Australia and New Zealand to the South Atlantic, and between the Falkland Islands and South Africa, this whale species has received little scientific attention. As it travels in small schools and is normally found in deep water, little is known about its migratory pattern.

Discovery Bay Record

The stranding of a male *Mesoplodon layardi* 13 April 1979 approximately 4 km west of Noble's Rocks, Discovery Bay, south-west Victoria, Lat. 31° 05' S, Long. 141° 04' E, was noted and reported to an officer of the National Parks Service, B. Livingston. Following

investigations by Portland National Parks Officer, S. Bruton, the specimen grey in colour, was photographed and measured by him 19 April. (Table 1, Figs 1, 2). Badly damaged and covered with numerous scores, it was apparently dead on beaching. Examination was carried out 21 April by the author, assisted by P. Kelly, Fisheries and Wildlife Officer, Warrnambool. By that time, the carcass was in a fairly advanced stage of decomposition, but it was possible to retrieve the severely fractured cranium. The large strap-teeth were intact, and attached to them were a number of stalked barnacles. Posterior portions of both left and right rami were fragmented, the rostrum of the cranium broken, and most of the major bones crushed. The skull was retrieved for subsequent examination, and the post-cranial carcass buried at the site for future reference. Cranial material is now lodged in the National Museum of Victoria, registered number C23446 (Fig. 2). The event was reported to the S.E.A.N. Bulletin (1979).



Fig. 2. Right mandibular tooth from *Mesoplodon layardi* Discovery Bay, C 23446. Photo: F. Coffa.

RECORDS OF STRAIT-TUBER WHALE, *MESOPH. D. R. LAYARDI* FROM AUSTRALIA

TABLE

Location	Latitude	Longitude	Ref. Map 1	Sex	Date	Source	Reg. No.	Material
Queensland, Rockhampton	23	15	31	-	10.1.1915	Q'ld Mus.	J2105	Cranium & few vertebrae
New South Wales, about 4 mi N of Broken Bay	33	151	13	-	7.1923	Aust. Mus.	S1636	Skull
New South Wales, Sydney, Little Bay	33	151	13	-	1.5.1971	Aust. Mus.	358, 359 363, 364	Skeleton Holotype <u>Callidon Guntheri</u>
New South Wales, Sydney, Curl Curl Beach	33	151	13	M	3.4.1962	Aust. Mus.	M8229	Skull
New South Wales, Nowra, Abramam's Bosom	34	14	36	M	1972	Aust. Mus.	361, 362	Skull, few vertebrae, part hyoid
Tasmania, Lefroy, Curry Beach	41	147	57	M	6.5.1965	C.V.M.	1963/1/233	Skull (no mandibles)
Tasmania, Frederick Henry Bay, Slopens Is.	42	147	39	-	2.1966	Tas. Mus.	A740	Skull
Tasmania, south-west, Recherche Bay	43	146	54	-	7.1.1919	Tas. Mus.	A733	Skull
Tasmania, south-west, Recherche Bay	43	146	54	-	winter 1925	Lit. record S & L	D754	Skeleton (articulated)
Tasmania. No further details				-		Tas. Mus. ex Univ. Tas.	-	Skull
Victoria, south-east, Anderson's Inlet	34	14	47	M	2.1955	C. Archer	-	Photographs "The Age"
Victoria, Port Fairy, Griffiths Is.	35	14	15	F	23.6.1961	N.M.V.	C3758	Skull
Victoria, Nelson, Discovery Bay	34	141	44	M	12.4.1979	N.M.V.	C23446	Skull
South Australia, Encounter Bay, Victor Harbour	35	139	37	M	3.3.1951	S.A.M.	M2969	Skull
South Australia, Encounter Bay, Victor Harbour	35	139	37	F	4.1.1951	S.A.M.	-	Photographs
South Australia, Encounter Bay, Victor Harbour	35	138	37	F	10.1.1959	S.A.M.	M5006	Skeleton
South Australia, Encounter Bay, Victor Harbour	35	138	37	F	12.1.1959	S.A.M.	M5007	Skull
South Australia, Encounter Bay, Victor Harbour	35	138	37	F	12.1.1959	S.A.M.	M5008	Skull

South Australia, Kangaroo Island, Rocky Point	35	48	137	50	18	M	13.2.1956	S.A.M.	M6269	Skeleton
South Australia, Kangaroo Island	35	48	138	03	19	-	2.1919	S.A.M.	M794	Skeleton
South Australia, Spencer Gulf, Port Rickaby	34	41	137	30	20	-	12.1929	S.A.M.	M2853	Skull
South Australia, Spencer Gulf, Cape Elizabeth	34	08	137	27	21	M	3.1969	S.A.M.	M8401	Skeleton (part)
South Australia, Coffin Bay Peninsula	34	32	135	15	22	M	2.1933	H.M. Hale	-	Photographs
South Australia, Streaky Bay	32	35	134	03	23	M	14.1.1934	S.A.M.	M4564	Skull
South Australia, Streaky Bay, Wharff's Point	32	35	134	03	24	-	2.2.1939	S.A.M.	-	Photographs
South Australia, Streaky Bay, Wharff's Point	32	35	134	03	25	-	4.2.1939	S.A.M.	-	Photographs
Western Australia, Cape Riche	34	36	118	47	26	-	1.1.1977	W.A.M.	6855	Skull
Western Australia, Rockingham	32	17	115	43	27	M	21.7.1950	W.A.M.	M4564	Skull

Abbreviations: Aust. Mus. Australian Museum Sydney
 N.M.V. National Museum of Victoria, Melbourne
 Q'ld Mus. Queensland Museum, Brisbane
 Q.V.M. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston
 S.A.M. South Australian Museum, Adelaide
 S & L Scott & Lord (1926)
 Tas. Mus. Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart.
 Univ. Tas. University of Tasmania, Hobart
 W.A.M. Western Australian Museum, Perth

Australian Records

The first Australian record of *M. layardi* was made by Gerard Krefft, Curator of the Australian Museum, Sydney in 1871. He reported the stranding of a specimen in Little Bay near Sydney and recognised it as being allied to the genus *Mesoplodon*. As the specimen was a female, Krefft was unaware that it was an example of *M. layardi*, which like other members of the genus shows sexual dimorphism in tooth formation and arrangement, and proposed that it be assigned to a new genus *Callidon* (Krefft, 1871). The complete skeleton was saved, and articulated for display in the Australian Museum, Sydney. In about 1872 a second specimen was collected, from Abraham's Bosom near Nowra, New South Wales. Few details are available, but the specimen was discovered by a bootmaker of Nowra who used one of the teeth in polishing his boots. He showed it to E. P. Ramsay (Curator of the Museum from 1874), who arranged for museum staff H. Barnes and J. A. Thorpe to collect it from the mangrove swamp where it reposed. The skull and some bones were secured as well as the tooth from the shoemaker. The opposite tooth was missing and was replaced by a plaster cast when the specimen was displayed in the gallery of the Australian Museum.

Subsequent collections of stranded specimens and photographic records are listed in Table 2. The distribution of these is shown in Map 1. Literature records exist for a number of these: — Aitken (1971), Flynn (1922), Guiler (1977), Hale (1931), Krefft (1871), Scott and Lord (1927), Wakefield (1967), Warneke (1963).

Records from Australian museums and literature indicate that 28 specimens have been collected or photographed on Australian shores. Of these, 27 specimens with good locality data are shown on Map 1. The main centres of stranding are on the south-east coast, and most records lie close to the major cities. Although it is feasible to spot and record strandings from light aircraft, this has not been a normal recording method. Thus distribution of the species

as mapped can be regarded as being distinctly correlated with opportunistic collecting in areas close to state museums.

Aitken (1971) noted that all of the *M. layardi* strandings in South Australia occurred during the summer months. In this present review, it appears that strandings take place in summer as a general rule, and occasionally in early winter.

Records show a peak in strandings from 1930-1940. This may be due to greater emphasis being placed on cetacean strandings in South Australia in that decade, or to an abnormally high mortality rate for the species over the period.

Data indicate that more males than females have been stranded — 11 males and 5 females. The sexes of the remaining 13 specimens are not known.

Formation of coastal National Parks hopefully will bring new records to light. A general public awareness of the usefulness of such data is part of the battle in gathering scientific information on this and other species whose biology is little known.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to officers of State Government departments for their prompt notification of this stranding and for general assistance. To the Curators of Mammals in other museums, I am grateful for the records they supplied from collections in their care — Mr P. Aitken, South Australian Museum, Mr A. P. Andrews, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Mr R. Green, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Dr D. Kitchener, Western Australian Museum, Mr B. Marlow, The Australian Museum, Dr. R. Molnar, Queensland Museum. Mr J. L. Bannister, Director of the Western Australian Museum and Dr. J. Ling, Director of the South Australian Museum also assisted with records. Dr. E. R. Guiler of the University of Tasmania provided useful information on strandings of *Mesoplodon layardi* from that state. Wendy Probert assisted with collation of records, Dianne Stephens with mapping, Frank Coffa with photography, and Judith Freeman typed the manuscript.

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Field Naturalists Club of Victoria

Reports on FNCV Activities

General Meeting — Monday, 10 December, 1979.

The meeting began with a minute's silence being observed for the late Mr Arthur Swaby, who died in October. Mr Garnet spoke in detail of Mr Swaby's contribution to natural history. Mr Swaby was a teacher by profession, and during his term as Principal of Horsham Primary School he was responsible for much research on the flora of the Little Desert and the Wimmera. He regularly contributed to the Naturalist and exhibited at meetings. His participation in the FNCV was considerable, having held the offices of Honorary Secretary and Librarian, Vice-President and President of the Council, and having been a foundation member of the Botany Group. Mr Swaby was made an Honorary Member in 1968.

The speaker for the evening was Mr Alex Mitchell, Chairman of the Soil Conservation Authority, whose subject was the causes and control of soil erosion in the Victorian alps. The alpine area is a vast and important water catchment. Conservation measures are necessary if the perenniality of water flow is to be ensured and if the dependent aquatic vegetation and other forms of life are to be maintained. Control measures have been introduced with regard to grazing animals, in particular cattle, which have caused a great amount of damage by both grazing

and trampling. Many native plants are re-establishing themselves — but this is a slow process. Mr Mitchell illustrated his address with a number of excellent slides.

Among the correspondence tabled was a letter from Elsa Swan of the Bird Observers Club, expressing concern regarding a proposed housing development on the east of Lake Tyers.

The centenary sub-committee reported on the calendar of events for the centenary year, which is to be included in the January/February Naturalist.

Under the microscope were Mr McInnes' exhibits of *Wolffia* and liverworts. Mr Baker had a number of pyrite exhibits, among which were some crystals from Italy, and graptolites and an ammonite which had been replaced by pyrite. The Lake Mountain excursion provided Dr Smith with molluscs which he exhibited: *Cystopelta petterdi*, *Rhyida* sp. and *Glacidorbis hedleyi*. Dr Smith also reported that he collected a carnivorous snail on this excursion.

The Secretary, Miss Wendy Clark, presented the idea and general outline of a series of study trips and camps which will be additional to other FNCV activities. This idea stemmed from Miss Helen Aston's address in October, and it is aimed at the young and active. Details of these trips will be reported in the Naturalist.